

12/16/70

Dear Dick,

I read your exchange with Cyril yesterday when the mailing arrived and began to read your memo. I find it interesting and persuasive as far as I've gotten (12). Because I still can't type for long (bursitis persists), what comment I can make I'd best start before it slips my mind.

While I am full of respect for Cyril in every way, professional and personal, from my own experience with him he can miss much, and he is a very, very busy man, so he often has to be too hasty. I am glad you do not accept his beliefs as the end and I am not persuaded by his response, except for the space he devoted to it. He is always very brief.

There is not much I can say about ballistics matters to you, so I say nothing about these things. Before looking at the few marks I made as I read, a few general things. Did not Greer confirm Kellerman? My own radiologist-consultant (friend of Humes', by the way), said exactly the same thing about metal in X-rays. He described them as like fluorescent lights and indicated magnification in appearance. Vredits get to be a sticky thing. Thompson originated nothing but error. He is not the first to go into a front shot by any means. I thought I was, but Ray Marcus long ago showed me he was (published in Italy only!). Ray saw and spoke at length to Tink in 9 or 10/66, and came to visit me from there, so I recall it. Ray and I have been out of touch and out of sympathy for years, but to the best of my knowledge, he is the first to publish anything on front-hit to the head. I am to the body, which you do not go into. Moreover, before Tink was published, many of ~~xx~~ us discussed this in public at great length, esp. Lane, Garrison and me.

Epstein's is the first publication of the Sibert-O'Neill report, but he had no more to do with that than you. Salandria was first to publish it in any form, from paraphrasing in CD1, I also did this in WW, which in that edition was published 5/9/66. I made no reference in it to Salandria to avoid having to attack him for the misuse he made of this stuff and his having actually dedicated his work to the FBI! I had located the report at the Archives but was then meting out pennies as I had to, so I'd not bought a copy, postponing that until I needed it. I then met Hoch for the first time, showed him some of the autopsy materials and explained them (this at the Archives), and when he asked about that report, told him, in confidence, how to get it, explaining I planned my own use, etc. Not understanding this fully, and without evil, sinister or any other wrongful intent, Paul told Salandria, who phoned Epstein, who was so fucking lazy he phoned Viking, for them to get it from the Archives. Incredible coincidence, their p.r. man looked me up, we met at the Bookseller's convention, I offered to help him, etc., gave him the Archives papers (he actually asked me to take him there-so you can measure Epstein's cooperativeness with his own publisher- and found he could do all this by phone. I didn't know what he was getting, knew only that it related to the autopsy, where Epstein's work was worst. And that is how it appeared in the Bantam edition, with the result that the first printing was considerably expanded before press-time. Sorry, I was just interrupted and now have to stop to pick Lil up. Sylvia is hung up on Tink and was on Epstein, so I'm sending no carbons to anyone. She is capable of misunderstanding references to Wecht, too. ...

Page 2, 1st par. Should you not refer to the fact that the left hemisphere was never examined-at all, by anyone-ever? Par 3, line four, "first" before "examined"? Do you mean in Dallas or there and Bethesda? Let me switch to your numbering: 8- a very good point that almost everyone has missed but is so graphic when you make careful examination of the slides. Line 3, same question. Line six, not a "few second" even, for he pivots and shows the back of his head to the lens. To be technically correct, why not refer to a few frames in some manner? I don't know how carefully you've been able to examine these slides, but there is a brief interval where the flap hides the front of the face that has fascinated me. Par 10 is the place where you refer to

Think in a manner suggesting the double-hit question is his. Par 11 is where Greer would be added if my recollection is correct. I question the use of "distibguished" as applied to Kellerman. I think of him as dedicated but not as bright as he could be.

12-your several references to the panel report do not sufficiently indicate its suppression and mislead into believing it was given wide distribution, made easily available, etc. Example: when Joe Hannon promised me a copy in Judge Halleck's courtroom for after lunch that day, he never gave it and never sent it. Example: although apparently mimeographed, it was available only by xerox from the Archives at 20¢ per page. Hence, "the public received" and "issuance on this page and other formulations elsewhere do not do it or Clark or the government what I would consider justice. And they may mislead some who may sometimes read this without background.

I just noticed your note on the 6.5 fragment. First, you should ask Howard's permission to use, for I believe he discovered this. I know I missed it. Next, you should credit it only to keep him from resentment....Although the agents were given two fragments, they signed an ambiguous receipt for "a missile", which I now have. For years its existence was denied. This is FYI only.

24, line 3, suggest "remaining" before "in the", for we do not know what metal was there before X-raying.

26, "Moriz".

30 Sketch very effective. But it prompts me to ask you the odds against this ~~xxx~~ pattern, with no flaw in the base of the skull ("floor of the fossa"), nothing going down or leftward.

31, 32-should you reverse sequence?

This is as far as I've gotten and I have to quit for a while.

38. Number is not a "condition". Rather than 40 visible in the X-rays, 40 remained to be shown on X-rays in one dimension. Is it possible that some overlapped others?

40. How about that 6.5 one?

Someplace in here I think it would be appropriate to refer to the design and reason for the design of military bullets and the utter impossibility of ~~ix~~ any one of them having caused such extremely fine fragmentation (except, perhaps, the very modern one, but not 399ers.

43. As a matter of fact, isn't the panel report written in a manner to suggest exactly this also? Except to the most discriminating and technically-informed?

45. Is it true that the panel does not say there was a "passage of a projectile", which is really what you are saying, even though you do not? They make exactly this claim. You may recall my ridicule of it. And carrying your argument further, could this not as well ~~ix~~ have been caused by a bullet fired from higher burstind, with the apttern of distribution of the finer particles being lateral to the path? I'm not suggesting this as the reality, merely a possibility, because you switch to other possibilities.

46. I forgot to note this when I spotted it warlier, but unless my recollection is incorrect, we are all depending upon a single projection, which really doesn't tell us that these fine particles point to the hole at all. The could appear to do this but be shown by another projection to actually run in another direction entirely.

48. Persuasive.

%0 here you begin to get to what I suggested also belongs before. Perhaps, as I read, there will be more I think should be included. But do pertinent characteristics re minute fragmentation include dimensions? Weight? Or, is it composition and

For the uninformed, misinformed, and unwilling-to-be-informed, I think you should discuss the purpose of the jacketing and, with most people regarding copper as one of the softer metals, the design and character of the jacketing.

50- add at end - if it is the source of this fragmentation?

Your repetition of 1800 fps throughout I think requires reference to the official fiction, for it can be used only in that context, can it not? And (52-3) is this behavior a possibility with the 399 type? Can it fragment this finely? Or, is it designed not to?

12/17-

62. Suggest changing "solid brain matter", which will appear as an exaggeration to some, to something like "tissue". Or, delete "solid".

65, as it now stands, is unfaithful. The two motions are not a single motion. First and I suggest "violent" for "swift") there is this strong motion straight back for all practical purposes. Muchmore strongly corroborates Zapruder on this. Then, after pivoting, to the left.

66. Suggest deletion of "behind" and "was", to make it read, "fence, which concealed", then delete "empty" from next line..

67, 3rd line up, "some of those"?

Just noticed footnote 27. It is wrong to say "published" and gives the same wrong impression, It was presented in court in defense of an action in which it lost.

70. The motion involves more than the head. It is the entire body. Don't fall into the "head-snap" fiction. Re Muchmore, "slightly" for "somewhat" re "behind", and I think you mean at the moment depicted in Z 313.

71. Not "the time the wounding occurred" but the explosion of this bullet. There was other wounding and you are saying there were two head shots. I think we lack basis, with a single, two-dimensional picture, for saying the spray appeared and disappeared "near the right-front part of the President's head." I would say it is visible in front and not imply that it went to the ~~left~~ right. I know of no evidence that justifies any other interpretation of Z and it is not possible to detect this in Nix or Muchmore, which were taken from the wrong side for this to be possible. And I add that with as clear a copy as I have been able to examine, there is a strong suggestion that the actual concentration of spray seems to be more to the left.. Is it "instantly after the spray" or coinciding with it? The motion I again emphasize is backward and involves the entire body--all that can be seen, all that can move. Unless you understand that these were two different motions, you have not really understood Z. The speed backward is enormously rapid, that to the left less so. I now have a set of 16mm Z slides, a 35mm print that can be made into slide if you ever come here, and I think it might be a good idea, before you finally complete this, if you were to do so. I also have other things I think it would be unwise to send, like a Z313 blowup so clear it can be enlarged to 14" wide. The Archives slides are clearer than mine, however. "Reels" is the wrong word. Instead of "more or less" I suggest "facing generally toward the front". It is not accurate to say the head and the body "pivot completely to the left". Rather, first the head alone pivots (the body never does), then the body falls to the left. Right here you disclose that you misunderstand, for you say it is a single motion: "the swift motion backward and leftward is check...back of the car seat." It is the backward motion that is checked, after which, after the recoil, there is the fall to the left. While it is accurate to say that brain matter was scattered to the left, it is also incomplete, for it seems to have gone in all directions, but mostly to the left. The reference to bone is imprecise, the for there is reason to believe some was observed going backward and some can be believed to have gone forward. In fact, there is visible spray forward.

72. I think you should eliminate from the argument all but the backward motion here and it is wrong to say that to the left was part of the same motion.

73. Rather than "the grassy knoll", "this". Everyone forgets there was another, that to the south, which at that point was directly in front of the President and the car. A case can be made for the shot having come from there and against its having come from that to the north, parts of which at that moment were directly to his right.

74. What do you infer or say can be inferred from the puff of smoke. Indeed, do we know that it had to be smoke? And can you time it with the head shot? I think not.

75. Persons were also observed there not running, and pictures show at least one there immediately prior to this shot. More of this may evolve. And, persons also ran there immediately.

76. Suggest changing the formulation to firing from the front rather than this grassy knoll and the description of the shot to that which is depicted in Z313.

77 Suggest adding by more than one person, at least one to the rear and at least one to the front.

I agree more is not needed at this point, but you might want to include the fact that the WC saw fit not to include what it had, other eyewitness statements that they heard shots from the front, or that press accounts of the time are replete with such statements, carefully filtered and diluted by the WC.

I would also add that the work of others makes it reasonable to believe this need not have been the only shot from the front, but this point is not essential to your purposes in this paper.

As you know, ^{you} lack the technical knowledge to sit in judgement on your ballistics expertise. You are my consultant in such matters, not the reverse. I find the argument persuasive. But I think you should include a discussion of bullets, 399 vs others, whether 399 could have fragmented in such a fashion, what other kinds could have and could not have, with what calibres it is most and least consistent, what velocities, etc.

And I again emphasize the inherent weakness coming from an incomplete understanding of Z, arguing that the two motions were one when they were not. If you could see a really clear Muchmore, as I have, ~~not~~ this is vivid there, as it is in careful analysis of the Z slides. It weakens your argument needlessly to try and pinpoint the exact source of the shot. It is enough to say from the front and you have no evidence it was from the right. There is credible evidence that the shot could have been from the right, carefully obfuscated. I have used some of it. You do not here. Your argument depends upon the puff of smoke, which, as you use it, is really without meaning, and people running, which is at best inadequate.

Gotta get to other things. Hope you'll find time to make this more definitive, eliminate what can be nitpicked.

Best,

HW